

CBC NEWSLETTER

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for members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., ornithological society of the Carolinas

Volume XXXVI

Winter 1990

Number 4

Emphasis On Birding At Winter Meeting

The emphasis will be on birding at the winter meeting of the Carolina Bird Club to be held February 1-3, 1991 in the Morehead City, NC area. The two most recent meetings in this area were quite successful. During the last meeting which was held here in February of 1989, thousands of Red Phalaropes put in a totally unprecedented inshore appearance. Great looks were had also at Eurasian Wigeon, Little Gull, Thayer's Gull and Iceland Gull.

Headquarters for the meeting will be the Holiday Inn at Atlantic Beach. The rate is \$40.00 single or double. Add \$5.00 for each additional person and \$10.00 for an ocean front room. **Reservation deadline is January 15.** Please use the reservation form provided in the Newsletter or call the motel at (919) 726-5444. If the Newsletter is delayed by the Christmas mail rush, make your reservation by phone. Try even if it is after the deadline. Three days notice of cancellation is required for a refund.

There are other motels in the area, and some with lower rates in Morehead City. There is a campground at Emerald Isle and a National Forest campground near Cape Carteret. A wide variety of restaurants are found in the Morehead City area. At least two of the seafood restaurants on the Morehead waterfront will be open in early February.

A form is also provided in the Newsletter for advance registration for the meeting. Remember that this is a great help to our volunteer registration crew and saves you \$1.00 over registration at the meeting.

Directions to Holiday Inn: For those coming into Morehead City on US 70, continue to 24th Street where you will turn right onto the bridge that crosses the inland waterway to Atlantic Beach. At the stoplight, turn right onto NC 58. Go about two and one half miles to the western limit of Atlantic Beach. You will see the Holiday Inn on your left. For those coming in from the west and south on NC 24, turn right onto NC 58 at Cape Carteret just east of Swansboro. After crossing the inland waterway, continue on NC 58 about 14 miles. You will see the Holiday Inn on your right at the Atlantic Beach city limit sign.

John Fussell promises that there will be no organized pelagic trip this year--honest! So all the best birders will be on terra firma leading field trips. Anyone who really wants to go offshore again might have the opportunity to do so though. The Carolina Princess is scheduled to run on that Saturday, and non-fishing riders can go for \$20.

Field trip organization is still in the preliminary stages, but we promise several different trips. There will definitely be trips to Fort Macon, Bird Shoal, Down

East, the Croatan National Forest, and a couple of new areas. There will also be one or two trips that focus on searching for the rarer gulls. If possible, there will be a trip to Cape Lookout, which is generally inaccessible in winter. And, if we can work out the logistics, we may decide to have a rail romp! Everyone should bring footgear for walking in a couple of inches of water.

At 8:00 p.m. on Friday night John Fussell will present a slide program on birds and birding areas in Carteret County (he promises to have the slides he didn't have in 1989!). This presentation will lead into the discussion of Saturday's field trips. On Saturday night, Warren Starnes, biologist at the nearby Croatan National Forest, will give a presentation about on-going management in the National Forest for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and other species. He will also discuss the Forest Service's new emphasis on ecosystem management.

For those that arrive early on Friday, the ocean in front of the Holiday Inn is often rather birdy. There will also be a sheet provided at registration with bird-on-your-own suggestions and directions and the locations of recent good finds.

If you have any questions about the meeting, you may call John Fussell at (919) 240-1046 between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. any evening.



SEASON'S
GREETINGS



Fall Meeting Excitement

"Hello, Base, we need some help out here." Elizabeth Feil was on her walkie-talkie speaking with Laney Harrill, retail manager at Chimney Rock Park. Elizabeth, a part-time guide at the Park, was helping CBC field trip leader, Zora Weisbecker, with a group of CBC members eager to see Peregrine Falcons. However, the loop trail which took us by the spring nesting site proved to be too difficult for one member whose legs gave out about halfway back to the visitor center at the top of Chimney Rock.

Laney recruited some volunteers and soon arrived with a back board on which the individual could be carried out if necessary. Several of the men on the field trip had stayed behind to assist, but with the encouragement and strong arms of Toby Gordon, Buck Elmore and a couple of EMT volunteers, the back board was needed only over one particularly rough spot. Bill Hough led the way and kept everyone's spirits up while Harry LeGrand was the rear guard for the successful evacuation.

Morning rain Saturday hampered the field trips more than weak legs, however. The most productive trip was probably to Hendersonville Marsh led by Robin Carter. Blue Ridge Parkway trips led by Allen Smith and John Wright, and a trip to the Fairview area led by Ruth Young also contributed to the count-



Toby Gordon and Terry Schopbach-Gordon break for lunch
with Lewis and Porge Buck at Chimney Rock Park

down total of 105 species.

The amateur photographers among the 144 registrants for the meeting were green with envy Friday evening as Dr. Fred Alsop, Chairman of the Dept. of Biological Sciences at East Tennessee State University, gave us a behind the scene look at wildlife photography. However, those of us with fear of heights consoled ourselves with the realization that being attacked by an owl while climbing a 30' tower to a photo blind was too big a price to pay, even for Audubon Magazine quality photos.

All of us were encouraged with the rebound of the Peregrine Falcon described

in the program Saturday evening by Allen Boynton of the North Carolina Natural Resources Commission. North Carolina had 10-20 pairs of Peregrines nesting in the State during 1990. This success has been due in part to the fledging in the State over the past six years of 70 birds which had been hatched in captivity. The release program has now been completed and efforts in the future will be limited to "fostering" captive hatchlings in nests where wild hatchlings have died.

Our thanks to Ruth Young and the Elisha Mitchell Audubon Chapter for a super fall meeting.

For UNCW this is Simon Thompson

"It is now approaching 9.00 in the evening, and we are a little behind our planned schedule. The two male Surf Scoters that were here yesterday are now nowhere to be seen, and besides that, they would be very difficult to pick up with the cars headlights pointing out over the Delaware River." The precise British accent is unmistakable. It's CBC Secretary, Simon Thompson, a regular weekly commentator on public radio for UNCW (88.7 FM) out of Spindale, NC.

"The heat is now on. There's a Caspian Tern, and a Clapper Rail, lots of Turnstone and Least Sandpipers, but where is the Peregrine Falcon that we saw so well yesterday? Midnight finds us exhausted

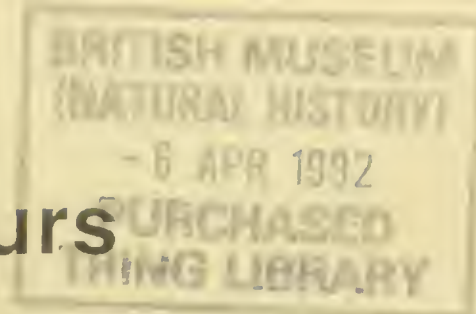
and in the Nature Centre at Cape May State Park."

Simon was describing his experiences as a member of the British entry in the 1990 New Jersey Birdathon. Joined by three birders from Great Britain, Simon was involved in a 24 hour race to see how many bird species they could spot within the boundaries of New Jersey. The British team was sponsored by Jaguar cars and Svarowski binoculars, and in cooperation with the International Council for Bird Preservation was raising money for a rain forest protection project in southern Thailand. A brightly colored bird, Gurney's Pitta, is a highly endangered resident of the area.

Racing around New Jersey in their sleek Jaguar (alas, they had to return it afterwards), the British team spotted a respectable 170 species. More important, the 40 teams raised a total of \$250,000 for various wildlife projects.

Nominating Committee

If you have suggestions for new officers of the Carolina Bird Club (president, secretary, treasurer, VP for SC and member at large for WNC) contact Patricia Wilkinson, 213 Windson Drive, Shelby, NC 28150, chairman of the nominating committee or members, Lex Glover and Marcia Pryor.



1990 OBServ Birding Tours

by Dennis M. Forsythe

Western Alaska Tour

Bob Odear and I co-led the OBServ Western Alaska Birding Tour on 18 May-12 June, 1990. The core tour went to Anchorage, Nome, Homer, Gambell and Wales with extensions to Bethel and Juneau.

First we went to the Homer Spit for such specialties as Red-faced Cormorant, Black Oystercatcher, Black Turnstone, Kittlitz's, Marbled and Ancient Murrelets. In Anchorage, we visited a variety of locations including: Lake Spenard, Potter Marsh and Cook Inlet. We saw a variety of waterfowl, shorebirds, (in breeding plumage) and boreal species.

Then we flew to Nome, which is a colorful gold mining town much like Cripple Creek, Colorado in the 1880's. We birded along the three roads radiating from town. Again we saw a host of waterfowl, shorebirds, and Siberian vagrants including a pair of Arctic Loons among Red-throated and Pacific Loons at Safety Lagoon. Other notable Species were: Aleutian Tern, Gyrfalcon, Willow Ptarmigan, Rock Ptarmigan, the *fulva* race of Lesser Golden Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Bristle-thighed Curlew, Rufous-necked Stint, Tufted Duck, Bluethroat, Northern Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail, and White Wagtail.

Next we flew to Gambell, a Siberian Yu'pik village of about 400 people on St.

Lawrence Island, 30 miles from Siberia. One of the great birding experiences at Gambell is watching seabirds from the Point where there is a constant passage of water fowl, seabirds and such Bering Sea specials as Yellow-billed Loon, Emperor Goose, Spectacled Eider, Steller's Eider, Parakeet, Least and Crested Auklets, Tufted and Horned Puffins, Northern Fulmar, Black-legged Kittiwake, Slaty-backed Gull along with the similar Siberian *vegae* race of Herring Gull. Other species we saw on Gambell were Rock Sandpiper and McKay's Bunting. One of the reasons for visiting Gambell is the chance to see Siberian vagrants, and during our stay we had a Common Sandpiper, an Eurasian Skylark and a Black-backed Wagtail.

From Anchorage we had two special extensions, first to Bethel in the Yukon Delta, where we flew to Curlew lake and saw Bristle-thighed Curlews on their nesting grounds and then to Jeneau. In Jeneau we hired a helicopter and flew over the mountains to the Taku River. There against the backdrop of the spectacular Taku Glacier with 100's of Bald Eagles roosting in trees and feeding on salmon, we watched an adult Steller's Sea Eagle, truly one of the world's most beautiful birds. A fitting end to a trip where we traveled 100's of miles by car, plane, boat, and helicopter; visited a diversity of habitats; and saw over 180 species of birds. Bob and I are ready to lead another tour in

1991 to this most extraordinary part of the United States.

Northwest Territory, Canada

I led an OBServ bird tour to Inuvik, NWT, Canada on 15-20 August 1990. Among the participants was CBC member **Jim Lasley**. The trip started in Inuvik, a modern city built by the government in the 1950's. From Inuvik, we went down the Mackenzie River 30 miles to Reindeer Station, a now abandoned government reindeer farm, where we stayed in a fur trapper's cabin. Our target bird at Reindeer Station was the Siberian Tit, an old world *Parid* with a North American range restricted to a small portion of Western Alaska, the Yukon and Northwest territories. The whole group had an excellent look at a tit on the 18th as it foraged in willows along the river bank in the Mackenzie Delta.

We returned to Inuvik and spent the 19th birding around town and along the Demster Highway. During this time Jim and I made a new NWT Big Day record of 40 species. On the 20th the tour ended as we all flew home from Inuvik. During the trip we saw 53 bird species including: Yellow-billed and Pacific Loon, Northern Goshawk, Northern Hawk-Owl, Northern Shrike and Pine Grosbeak.

Hurricane Hugo Legacy

The Francis Beidler Forest is still feeling the effects of Hurricane Hugo. Tourism in the Charleston area has not rebounded, and attendance at the Forest is down by 40%. Revenue has been seriously impacted at a time when funds for new educational displays are needed. Your contribution would help complete the recovery from Hugo. Make checks payable to National Audubon Society and mail to Francis Beidler Forest, Rt. 1, Box 600, Harleyville, SC 29448. Your visit to the Forest this spring would boost attendance

revenues and provide an unusual opportunity to observe the recovery process.

Another attraction in the Charleston area which showed great ingenuity in recovering from the effects of Hurricane Hugo is Magnolia Plantation and Gardens. Now they have announced a series of guided bird walks during December, 1990, January and February, 1991. Led by CBC member **Perry Nugent** or the Magnolia

staff, the walks are scheduled each Saturday at 8:15 a.m. Owl walks are scheduled on December 8, January 12, February 9, and February 16 at 3:30 p.m.

Walks will last 2-2 1/2 hours covering the dike and ricefields along the Ashley River, Audubon Swamp Garden and woodlands. Refreshments will be served and reservations are required. Regular admission of \$7 for adults or \$3 for Garden members will be charged. *Magnolia Plantation and Gardens, Rt. 4, Charleston, SC 29414. Tel. (803) 571-1266.*

Backyard Birding

with Frances J. Nelson

Column conditions are improving. This time I have letters from two fellow birders. The first is from **Betty McIlwain**, Brevard, NC who has watched a pair of kestrels for two years and this year saw two fledglings. She is concerned, as I am sure we all are, that their nesting sites are getting fewer. She says, "we seem to cut down every dead tree and tear down all of our old buildings--and now so many of the old barns are being destroyed." So, the next time you consider removing a dead tree, think about the birds. Can you just trim limbs that might be dangerous to your property and leave as much of the tree as possible?

Ms. McIlwain also mentions that her son and his family thoroughly enjoy watching Barn Owls which live in a dead portion of a large oak in their front yard. I'm envious. Although we have heard the owls on our place, we have yet to see one, much less have one close enough to watch. Besides the pleasure derived from watching the owls, her son is also confident that fewer mice and rats inhabit the area. Now we have two reasons for keeping dead trees--the kestrels and the owls. If you don't have the makings for natural nesting sites, how about considering nesting boxes for these as well as other birds? Make putting up a nesting box a late holiday celebration.

The second letter comes from **Dave Abraham** of West Columbia, SC. Actually, his letter arrived at Clyde Smith's the day of my deadline for the fall newsletter and Clyde used the story about the "Michael Jordan" titmouse and the fig, but Mr. Abraham's letter had more delightful stories. After my experience with the squirrels and the cantaloupe seeds, Mr. Abraham thought maybe his own experiment was not scientific enough (cardinals relished his seeds), so he tried it again. Sure enough, cardinals returned. The third time he put out the cantaloupe seeds, the cardinals didn't even wait for them to dry out. When Mr. Abraham went out after a thunderstorm to empty the water from the fruit tray, he noticed the hulls were slit and the seeds were missing. Rather than dexterity, he says the cardinals



White-breasted Nuthatch

have "billity," a terrific new word to add to the birding vocabulary.

Not to be daunted by one experiment, I also tried the cantaloupe idea again, and sure enough, a squirrel returned. Perhaps it's the difference in the birds and squirrels of North and South Carolina, or perhaps it's just Granville County squirrels. It makes no difference. Squirrels have to eat, too, and when they are going after the cantaloupe innards, they are leaving the sunflower seeds for the birds. I get rid of our cantaloupe seeds, the birds and squirrels are happy, and our compost pile is not loaded with cantaloupe seedlings--a perfect recycling venture.

Mr. Abraham recycles other food scraps, too. When he dines out on fish and hushpuppies, he takes the batter flakes and hushpuppies home for the birds. He puts the flakes on their open feeder, and the hushpuppies go into a thin oak log in which he has drilled twenty 1 1/4 inch holes. He hangs the log under their back porch and the birds, including a Red-bellied Woodpecker, love the "onion-flavored morsels."

I'm not sure I could be as generous. I love hushpuppies, but we do have a similar log (ours is cedar) which we fill with marvel meal, and the birds love it. Speaking of marvel meal (the recipe was in the winter 1990 newsletter), brings me to our latest bird--a White-breasted Nuthatch. I realize this particular bird is a frequent visitor to our area, but neither we, nor the

birders who lived here for four years before we moved in, had seen one before. We have had the Red-breasted and Brown-headed Nuthatches, but never the White-breasted, and he loves the marvel meal. Almost any time of day I can look out and see him either coming or going.

The only other bird we have added to our property list since the last newsletter is the Great Egret, who stopped by our pond one morning. Evidently, he was not impressed, as he left about ten minutes after he arrived, but I was quite fascinated with him. Brief visits like the egret's make me want to spend all of my time on the front porch waiting for the next spectacle, but, alas, I have other things to do, so I have to settle for glancing at the pond between tasks. When I am at work, I wonder how many birds I'm missing...

And I'm sure I must be missing some, but I still see many of the little creatures. One morning in August, I looked at the back deck and saw a goldfinch, a Blue Grosbeak, and a cardinal siting in a row in a sunbeam. Their colors were magnificent. I tried to take a photograph, but of course it didn't turn out with the true colors.

The next day, as my husband and I went walking along the creek, our dog flushed a large owl. It flew to a relatively low tree branch where it sat until we got almost close enough to study it, then it flew away. It had been sitting near a shallow part of the creek, but we don't know whether it was feeding, bathing, or nursing an injury. We think it was a Great Horned Owl because of its size and wingspread, but we have never heard one around here. Any suggestions?

With the approach of cooler weather, the hummingbirds left. We left for the weekend September 8-9, and when we returned the feeders were still full. We left two up just in case, but we never saw another hummer.

A Sharp-shinned Hawk appeared September 2. We wonder if he is the same one who was here last year. He certainly acts the same--sitting on the back deck or a nearby tree for a couple of hours every morning--but now he has adult plumage

(continued on Page 5)

(continued from Page 4)
rather than the light spots of last year. It is occurrences like this that make us wish we had a banding license, so we could be sure it's the same bird. The hawk is just as fascinating and even more beautiful than last year, but he keeps the other birds away from the feeders.

In spite of the hawk, I saw our first junco on October 22, and a week later it was joined by other of its kind as well as White-throated Sparrows. Since then we have seen an occasional goldfinch and a pair of Purple Finches. A pair of House

Finches spent a day here, but they moved on. Perhaps they didn't like the idea of the hawk hanging around, but the other birds seem to have adjusted. They disappear in the mornings but show up in abundance in the early evenings.

That's it for this newsletter--and it's time for the hawk. CJ and I didn't attend the Asheville meeting, although we planned to, but we are hoping to get to the winter meeting. If you have any bird stories, please send them to me at 977 Dogwood Hill Ln, Wake Forest, NC 27587, or talk to me at the meeting in Morehead City.

CBC Rare Bird Alert

(704) 332-BIRD

Bird Identification Quiz

What is that bird on the South Carolina auto license plate? ? ?

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND ORDER FORM

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Tel. () _____ (home) _____ (business) _____

ENTER/RENEW MEMBERSHIP AS INDICATED

SEND MATERIALS INDICATED

☐ Individual (\$12)	☐ Life (\$200)	☐ CBC Cloth arm patch \$1.50 ea., \$1.25 ea. in quantity
☐ Family (\$15)	☐ Patron (\$ 50)	☐ CBC Decals (water type) 75c ea., 50c ea. in quantity
☐ Student (\$ 6)		☐ Daily Checklists 10/\$1.00, 25/\$1.25, 50/\$2.50, 75/\$3.75
☐ Affiliate Club (\$15)		100/\$5.00
☐ Library/Institution (\$15)	Make check payable to Carolina Bird Club, Inc. and mail to PO Box 27647, Raleigh, NC 27611	

Holiday Inn Reservation Form

Carolina Bird Club Winter Meeting, February 1-3, 1991

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Rooms (single or double occupancy) \$40.00. Each additional person \$5.00. Add \$10.00 for ocean front room.

Please reserve _____ room(s) at \$40.00 per night. _____ I would prefer an ocean front room. My check for the first night's lodging is enclosed. I will arrive _____ and depart _____.

Mail with deposit to **Holiday Inn**, PO Box 280, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512 or call (919) 726-2544 before January 15.

Registration Form

CBC Winter Meeting, February 1-3, 1991

Name(s) _____

(list each name for name tags)

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$ _____ for _____ member registrations at \$4 each and _____ nonmember registrations at \$5 each. Registration at meeting will be \$5 for members and \$6 for nonmembers.

Mail with check to **Carolina Bird Club, Inc.**, PO Box 27647, Raleigh, NC 27611

Welcome New Members

Frank & Karen Barrett
Brevard, NC

Galen D. Giorgio
Rock Hill, SC

Donna Robinson
Reidsville, NC

Randy Cecil
Greenville, SC

Elizabeth Holden
Black Mountain, NC

Don Seritt
Columbia, SC

John R. Christ
Greensboro, NC

Jerry Johnson
Lexington, SC

Bill Sullivan
Knoxville, TN

E. C. Clyde
Ettingham, SC

John and Edith Machado
Wilmington, NC

Chet Tomlinson
Boone, NC

Sally Coburn
Weaverville, NC

Charles & Dolores Marley
Asheville, NC

John & Pat Weyher
Topsail Beach, NC

Chuck & Kasie Cochran
Shelby, NC

George McCoy
Columbia, SC

Anita L. Wood
Columbia, SC

Nidia Duran
Heredia, Costa Rica

C. M. & Dorothy McMurray
Shelby, NC

Chip Notes

This year's survey of the endangered Kirtland's Warbler in Michigan counted 265 singing males. This is a significant increase from the 212 males counted last year according to the Endangered Species Coordinator for the Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources. A forest fire near Mack Lake in the Huron National Forest in 1980 has created an additional 20,000 acres of Jack Pine habitat. This area is now in prime condition for nesting Kirtland's warblers.

A little closer to home, the Eastern Bluebird has been removed from the list of Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Fauna of North Carolina. CBC member and Curator of Birds at the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences, **David S. Lee**, attributes the bluebird population boom to the tremendous effort of people who have put up thousands of bird houses in response to publicity about the scarcity of suitable nesting sites.

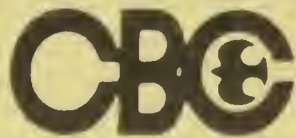
Former Headquarters Secretary

Elizabeth Muller Wilson, widow of Julius L. Wilson, MD, died April 24, 1990 in Tryon, NC.

She was known to CBC members as Betty Paterson. Betty became headquarters secretary for CBC in 1966 two years after the death of her first husband, Robert G. Paterson, Ph.D. She resigned in 1981 to marry Dr. Wilson. At that time she was made an honorary life member of CBC.

CBC Newsletter is published quarterly by Carolina Bird Club, Inc., the ornithological society of the Carolinas, with headquarters at Raleigh, NC. CBC is a nonprofit corporation, founded in 1937, with membership open to anyone interested in birds, natural history and conservation. Members are encouraged to submit items of interest to CBC Newsletter, Clyde Smith, Editor, 2615 Wells Avenue, Raleigh, NC 27608.

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